

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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CHURCHILL DOWNS OPENS 11-DAY SEPTEMBER MEET FRIDAY AT 12:45 P.M.

***Record \$8.314 Million Offered to Horsemen in Three-Week Stand Up 57.6% from Last Year;
Supercharged Purses Will Average \$755,818 per Day or \$76,275 per Race;
103 Horses Entered on Opening Day's 10-Race Card***

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Tuesday, Sept. 10, 2019) – Horse racing on the thriving Kentucky circuit shifts to Churchill Downs on Friday (Sept. 13) with a 10-race program at 12:45 p.m. (all times Eastern) as the famed Louisville racetrack opens its seventh September Meet for an action-packed 11-date run through Sunday, Sept. 29.

What a difference a year makes. Heck, what a difference six years makes.

When the September Meet was inaugurated in 2013, the average purse per race was \$36,690. Last year, the number grew to \$46,758, which was an 8.6% increase from the prior year.

The average purse offered this year in Vice President of Racing **Ben Huffman**'s 109-race September Meet condition book is a whopping \$76,275, thanks to robust business from state-of-the-art historical racing machines that debuted one year ago at nearby **Derby City Gaming**.

This year's anticipated three-week September Meet, presented by **Commonwealth Technology**, will feature a record \$8.314 million in prize money (all purses include prize money from the **Kentucky Thoroughbred Development Fund**), which averages to a hefty \$756,000 per day. Last year, an unprecedented \$5.097 million was paid to horsemen for a daily average of \$463,000.

Maiden special weight races are worth \$95,000 and allowance races range from \$97,000 to \$105,000.

If the record-breaking Spring Meet at Churchill Downs is any indication, September's lofty overnight purse structure and eight-race, \$1.375 million stakes schedule could lure large fields, high-quality participants and bigger payouts for bettors.

A total of 103 horses and 10 also-eligible entries were drawn Tuesday for Friday's opener for an average of 10.3 horses per race. The average field size during last year's September Meet was 8.5 horses.

This year's Spring Meet, which ran April 27-June 29, also attracted a strong average of 8.5 horses per race when prize money grew from \$585,000 daily in 2018 to \$846,000. With more horses and stiff competition in each race, the average \$2 win payoff increased 23.8% to \$13.52 and there were double-digit profit gains for bettors in most all other betting pools, including average \$2 Exacta payouts, which were up 49% to a whopping \$108.22.

Friday's 10-race card features a trio of allowance races and a trio maiden special weights.

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The most lucrative race of the day is Race 6 at 3:16 p.m. when eight older horses sprint six furlongs in a \$105,000 conditioned allowance (optional \$150,000 claiming tag). The **Sagamore Farm**-owned and **Stanley Hough**-trained entry of **He Hate Me** and **Recruiting Ready** figure to take plenty of action from bettors. He Hate Me finished second, three-quarters of a length back of **Bon Raison**, in the restricted \$100,000 Tale of the Cat at Saratoga on Aug. 9. Meanwhile, this year's Gulfstream Park Sprint (GIII) winner Recruiting Ready hopes to rebound from a disappointing West Coast trip to Del Mar when he finished sixth as the 8-5 favorite in the \$300,000 Bing Crosby (GI) on July 27.

Also entered in the competitive heat is back-to-back Ellis Park allowance winner **Mr Darcy**, stakes winners **C Z Rocket** (2018 Kelly's Landing), **Done Deal** (2018 Iowa Sprint Handicap), **Colonelsdarktemper** (2017 West Virginia Derby) and **Kowboy Karma** (2017 Strike Your Colors), and Grade I-placed **Mr. Crow**.

A major focus for many horsemen during the second half of the year is the development of 2-year-olds. There are two "baby" races for maiden fillies on Friday – a 1 1/16-mile turf test (Race 5 at 2:45 p.m.) and a one-mile dirt race (Race 7 at 3:48 p.m.). They are the first of at least 18 maiden, allowance or stakes races for juveniles during the September Meet. Combined with the nearby Churchill Downs Trackside Training Center, a total of 373 two-year-olds recorded local workouts in the last week.

Road to Kentucky Derby Kickoff Highlights Opening Weekend Stakes Quartet

The September Meet's eight-race stakes schedule cumulatively worth \$1.375 million kicks off Saturday with a stakes quartet, including two important 1 1/16-mile fixtures for juveniles that could produce starters in next spring's Kentucky Derby Presented by Woodford Reserve (Grade I) and the Longines Kentucky Oaks (GI). The \$200,000 **Iroquois** (GIII) kicks off the "Road to the Kentucky Derby" series (Top 4 Points: 10-4-2-1), while the \$200,000 **Pocahontas** (GII) starts the "Road to the Kentucky Oaks" (Top 4 Points: 10-4-2-1). Also, both races are **Breeders' Cup "Win and You're In" Challenge** events, which means the winners will receive automatic berths in the starting gate for their respective Breeders' Cup races on Nov. 1 at Santa Anita with full entry fees and travel expenses paid.

Saturday's stakes foursome is completed by a pair of stakes for fillies and mares, the \$200,000 **Locust Grove** (GIII) over 1 1/16 miles and \$125,000 Open Mind (Listed) at six furlongs.

Entries for Saturday's 11-race card will be taken Wednesday morning.

Dennis' Moment, Covfefe, Omaha Beach to Use September Meet as Launching Pad to Breeders' Cup

Some of horse racing's brightest stars are set to compete during the September Meet. Rising 2-year-old star **Dennis' Moment**, crack female sprinter **Covfefe** and come-backing 3-year-old **Omaha Beach** appear primed for starts at Churchill Downs in advance of the Nov. 1-2 Breeders' Cup World Championships at Santa Anita.

Dennis' Moment is a certain favorite for Saturday's \$200,000 Iroquois Stakes (GIII) following his eye-popping 19 1/4-length maiden special weight score at Ellis Park on July 27, and is considered by many onlookers as the uber-early favorite to win next year's Kentucky Derby.

"Dennis' Moment is one of the most promising 2-year-olds we've ever had in our barn," said **Dale Romans**, Churchill Downs' all-time leading trainer with 729 wins (ahead of **Bill Mott**'s 715 and **Steve Asmussen**'s 704). "We've had some very nice 2-year-olds and Dennis is right there with them. This horse is only a maiden winner but the athleticism he shows us every morning he trains, and obviously his impressive 19 1/4-length maiden win, leads us to believe the future could be anything."

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“The Iroquois is a race that kicks off the path to what our ultimate goal is, winning the Kentucky Derby. I think the timing of the Iroquois works nicely because it gives us time after the race to train toward the Breeders’ Cup Juvenile.”

Expected to headline the 11-race card on Sept. 21 is recent Test Stakes (GI) heroine Covfefe, who will use the \$125,000 Dogwood Stakes (Listed) as a likely final prep prior to competing in the \$1 million Breeders’ Cup Filly & Mare Sprint (GI).

“(The Dogwood) just fits nicely with the calendar and we can just run from our home base at Churchill,” trainer **Brad Cox** said. “Obviously the Breeders’ Cup is our goal with her and this race gives us good spacing to have plenty of training before we go to California.”

According to Hall of Fame trainer **Richard Mandella**, Southern California-based Arkansas Derby (GI) winner Omaha Beach is targeting the \$150,000 Ack Ack presented by GE Appliances (GIII) on Sept. 28 as his comeback race following surgery to repair an entrapped epiglottis – the injury that forced him to be scratched as the morning line favorite from this year’s Kentucky Derby.

2019 Churchill Downs’ Eight-Race, \$1.375 Million September Meet Stakes Schedule

Day	Date	No.	Grade	Purse	Stakes Race	Conditions	Distance
Saturday	Sept. 14	51 st	II	\$200,000	Pocahontas	2yo F	1 1/16 M
Saturday	Sept. 14	38 th	III	\$200,000	Iroquois	2yo	1 1/16 M
Saturday	Sept. 14	36 th	III	\$200,000	Locust Grove	F & M, 3 & Up	1 1/16 M
Saturday	Sept. 14	11 th		\$125,000	Open Mind (Listed)	F & M, 3 & Up	6 F
Saturday	Sept. 21	44 th		\$125,000	Dogwood (Listed)	3yo F	7 F
Saturday	Sept. 28	7 th	III	\$250,000	Lukas Classic presented by Budweiser	3 & Up	1 1/8 M
Saturday	Sept. 28	27 th	III	\$150,000	Ack Ack presented by GE Appliances	3 & Up	1 M
Saturday	Sept. 28	42 nd		\$125,000	Jefferson Cup (Listed)	3yo	1 1/8 M (T)

Downs After Dark on Saturday, Sept. 28 at 6 p.m.; Bourbon & Beats is Theme

The \$250,000 Lukas Classic presented by Budweiser (Grade III), along with the \$150,000 Ack Ack presented by GE Appliances (GIII) for milers and \$125,000 Jefferson Cup (Listed) for 3-year-olds at 1 1/8 miles on turf are the featured events on Saturday, Sept. 28 – the lone **Downs After Dark Presented by Budweiser** night racing event of the September Meet and last one of the year. The event theme that evening will be **Bourbon & Beats** and guests are encouraged to wear shades of purple and stay on trend with autumn fashion as they celebrate a pairing of Kentucky sounds and spirits.

Ideal Weather: Sunny Skies, Mid-to-Upper 80s

Opening weekend weather in Louisville will be summerlike, according to the **National Weather Service**, with a forecast of sunny skies and temperatures in the low-to-mid 90s on Friday, upper 80s on Saturday and low 90s on Sunday.

Racing Thursday-Sunday; First Race 12:45 p.m. Most Days

Churchill Downs’ 11-day meet will be staged over three weekends through Sunday, Sept. 29 with racing on Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. The first race will be 12:45 p.m. daily (admission gates open at 11:30 a.m.) with the exception of a pair of 5 p.m. (gates at 4 p.m.) Twilight Thursdays and a 6 p.m. first post (gates at 5 p.m.) on Saturday, Sept. 28.

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Popular 5 p.m. ‘Twilight Thursdays’ Return With \$1 Beer, Live Music, Food Trucks, Lawn Games

The two **Twilight Thursdays Presented by Blue Moon** will feature \$1 Blue Moon drafts and \$1 select domestic beers, live music chosen by **91.9 WFPK’s Kyle Meredith (DJ S.Y.I.M.O.N.E** on Sept. 19 and **Owoso** on Sept. 26), food trucks (**Joella’s Hot Chicken, Flavaville, Red Top Gourmet Hot Dogs, Sweet N Savory Crepes, Mark’s Feed Store** and **Bourbon Bent BBQ**), and lawn games (Snookball, Corn Hole and Giant Jenga) in Churchill Downs’ Plaza from 5-8 p.m.

Family Adventure Day Scheduled for Sunday, Sept. 22

Family Adventure Day Presented by Kroger is scheduled for Sunday, Sept. 22. Families are encouraged to bring the kids to Churchill Downs for a day of racing and family activities including pony rides, inflatables, a petting zoo, stick horse races on the turf course, face painting and more. The theme is “**Be Creative!**” and special happenings include interaction with the **Kentucky Department of Agriculture’s Mobile Science Activity Center**; artwork with mural and conceptual artist **Resko**; arts and crafts with **Side by Side Studio**; a mobile recording studio with **AMPED: The Academy of Music Production, Education and Development**; and a meet-and-greet with **Elsa, Superman and Churchill Charlie**.

Tickets for adults and children age 3 and up are \$10 when purchased online in advance at ChurchillDowns.com (\$12 at the gate), and include unlimited access to all kid-friendly activities through 5 p.m. Churchill Downs is also offering a Family Four Pack that includes four Family Adventure Day tickets, four family meals in the Family Adventure Day area and two racing programs for only \$48 (a \$64 package includes reserved box seats).

Betting Menu Features 20-Cent Single 6 Jackpot

The betting menu will be the same as recent meets and includes the 20-cent minimum “**Single 6 Jackpot**,” which is offered on the last six races each day with a low 15-percent takeout. The Single 6 Jackpot will be paid out only if there is a single winning wager with six winners placed at the required minimum bet value. If there are multiple winning wagers with six winners in the six-race sequence, 90 percent of the net money wagering into the pool will be paid out, and the remaining 10 percent will carry to the Single 6 Jackpot. If there are no tickets will all six winners, 100 percent of the pool will carry to the Single 6 Jackpot. There will be a mandatory payout on closing day.

Lanerie, Amoss Defend September Titles

Veteran jockey **Corey Lanerie**, who won his 17th Churchill Downs riding title this Spring with 43 winners, had the hot hand during last year’s September Meet with 18 wins, six more than **Julien Leparoux**. **Brian Hernandez Jr., James Graham** and **Ricardo Santana Jr.** were tied for third with eight wins each.

Tom Amoss was the September Meet leading trainer a year ago with seven wins from 17 starters, including a runaway win by **Joel Politi’s Serengeti Empress** in the Pocahontas (GII), who’d use the race as a springboard to becoming this year’s gate-to-wire winner of the \$1.25 million Longines Kentucky Oaks (GI) – America’s most lucrative and prestigious race for 3-year-old fillies. Behind Amoss last September was Louisville native Brad Cox (6-for-33), record 21-time Churchill Downs leading trainer Steve Asmussen (5-for-41), **Chris Hartman** (5-for-17) and **Ian Wilkes** (5-for-28).

General Admission, Reserved Seating Options

General admission to Churchill Downs is \$5 (\$12 for Downs After Dark on Saturday, Sept. 28). Reserved box seats are \$12 (\$27 for Downs After Dark) and indoor dining options are \$39 (\$69 for Downs After Dark). Children 12 and under are admitted free when accompanied by an adult (Downs After Dark policy: no one under the age of 18 will be admitted to the track unless they are accompanied by a parent or responsible adult). Tickets can be purchased online at www.ChurchillDowns.com/Tickets or by calling (502) 636-4400.

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Senior Day on Friday, Sept. 27

The lone **Senior Day** of the September Meet at Churchill Downs is scheduled for Friday, Sept. 27. Guests 60 and up can enjoy lunch and a day at the races in Millionaires Row for only \$24.

'Stakes and Eggs' Sunday Brunch

On Sundays, Churchill Downs is offering a special **"Stakes and Eggs" brunch special** in the Stakes Room. The \$48 package for adults and \$25 package for children includes a seat in the Stakes Room on the fourth floor of the Clubhouse and all-you-can-eat access to the brunch menu that includes an omelet station, scrambled eggs, biscuits and country gravy, French toast, hot brown, carved country ham, crispy bacon, sausage patties, hash brown potatoes with peppers and onions, fresh fruit, garden vegetables, breakfast breads and a chef's dessert display.

Odds and Ends

Travis Stone will describe the racing action throughout the September Meet Presented by Commonwealth Technology. Veteran odds maker **Mike Battaglia** has morning line odds duty for the 45th consecutive year.

'Churchill Downs Today' Airs One-Hour Before First Race

Joe Kristufek is Churchill Downs' on-track and simulcast host with additional race-by-race analysis to be provided by **Ed DeRosa, James Scully, Scott Shapiro** and **Brandon Stauble**.

"Churchill Downs Today," the track's daily racing preview program, will air one hour before the first race of the day and can be seen on-track and www.TwinSpires.com. Also, Churchill Downs Today will be streamed live on Twitter via @twinspires and Facebook via www.facebook.com/twinspires.

Past performances and other handicapping information for Churchill Downs' races available online at Brisnet via <http://www.brisnet.com/churchill>.

For more information, call (502) 636-4400 or visit www.churchilldowns.com.

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